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STATEMENT OF GEORGE W. FELLENDORF BEFORE THE MARYLAND COMMISSION TO STUDY EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN.

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THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEAF URGED THAT THE STATE OF MARYLAND CONTINUE TO INVESTIGATE NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA OF EDUCATION OF THE HANDICAPPED. HE RECOMMENDED THAT CONTINUAL REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF NEEDS BE MADE BY REGIONAL SUBCOMMITTEES, PROGRAMS BE COORDINATED BY AN ADMINISTRATOR AT THE STATE LEVEL, AND PARENT COUNSELING CENTERS BE ESTABLISHED. THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF PREPARING THE HANDICAPPED TO BE SELF-SUPPORTING, CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS OF SOCIETY MAY BE MET BY MORE AND BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION AT THE SECONDARY AND COLLEGE LEVEL, IMPROVED PROGRAMS FOR TRAINING TEACHERS OF THE HANDICAPPED, INCREASED ATTENTION TO THE NEEDS OF THE PRESCHOOL AGE CHILD, DEVELOPMENT OF NEW APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES, AND ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR THE HANDICAPPED. PROBLEMS OF THE LESS SEVERELY HANDICAPPED MUST NOT BE OVERLOOKED. ELEVEN SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS DRAWN FROM THE TESTIMONY ARE LISTED. (JD)

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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EC000508

STATEMENT OF George W. Fellendorf
before the Maryland Commission to Study Educational Needs
of Handicapped Children

Baltimore, Maryland
September 26, 1966

Mr. Chairman, and ladies and gentlemen:

I am George W. Fellendorf, Executive Director of the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf, an internationally known non-profit organization with headquarters in Washington, D. C. The Association was founded in 1890 by Alexander Graham Bell to act as an information center relating to deafness and to promote the teaching of speech, lipreading, and the use of residual hearing to the deaf.

By way of further introduction, I might mention that I am a resident of the State of Maryland, residing at 1300 Ruppert Road, Silver Spring, and have three daughters attending public schools in Montgomery County. One of these daughters, age 14, is profoundly deaf. Thus I have a personal as well as a professional interest in the deliberations of this Commission.

The very fact of the existence of the Moore Commission is a heartening demonstration that the trend for reform in the free State of Maryland has indeed reached into the area of the education of the handicapped. It is an encouraging sign that the legislature has seen fit to authorize the Commission in recognition of the changing scope of the education of the handicapped and the increasing needs of the handicapped for better and more complete preparation for life in a normal society.

There are indeed trends in the education of the handicapped which will affect our youngsters today and in the future. As Federally-supported

research continues at an outstanding pace, there will unquestionably be new ideas, philosophies, and techniques developed which will have to be incorporated, to a greater or lesser extent, in the programs within the State of Maryland. For this reason, as well as that of the increasing needs and demands of the parents of handicapped children in our State, we can expect that the deliberations of the Moore Commission will have far-reaching effects, perhaps for generations in the future. I envy you your opportunity!

Within the State of Maryland we are seeing, in the spirit of reform, evidences of willingness to change and to take a look at modern technology, shifts in population, increasing moral commitments, and the demands of a great society. Constitutional reform, reapportionment of districts, the recognition of civil rights, demands for home rule in some counties, and the study of the Executive Branch of the State Government, all reflect this spirit of reform that is alive now in a State which has for too long been retaining policies and practices from another century.

In the area of the handicapped, then, there is a tremendous opportunity for leadership that I hope the State of Maryland will accept so that within the next five years we will have representatives from other states and possibly other countries visiting us in Maryland to examine what may be considered an exemplary program for the rest of the world to emulate.

Because of the changes already encountered and contemplated, I believe it is imperative that this Commission be continued beyond the November 1 deadline established by House of Delegates Resolution 54. I would like to add my voice, to others already raised, recommending that the Legislature and the Governor continue this Commission, perhaps with rotating membership, for at least a period of five years to assure that the winds of change blowing from universities, clinics, and demonstration programs throughout the country do not blow over this State like the jetstream but

come down to mix with us to refresh us and help us to build better programs.

I would further recommend that regional subcommittees be established throughout the State so that the general and special needs of such areas may be continually reviewed and presented to this Commission periodically for consideration and recommendations to the Governor and to the Legislature. There are any number of public-spirited citizens, including persons highly qualified professionally who, I am sure, would welcome the opportunity to serve on such a committee in the interests of the handicapped children of this State.

I would hope that in the course of its hearings this Commission will have looked long and hard at the organization of the State Department of Education with regard to programs for the handicapped. It is one thing to have citizens organized and alert to consider the improvements and changes deemed desirable for the children of our State, but it is another thing to have these programs implemented by the State Department of Education. Under House Resolution 16847, U. S. House of Representatives, August 4, 1966
introduced by The Honorable Hugh L. Carey and our own Congressman, The Honorable Carlton Sickles, it appears that there will be substantial sums of money allocated to the states specifically for programs for the handicapped. Included will be funds to support special projects to develop state leadership and for such purposes as recruiting and training personnel for educating and training of the handicapped.

In an evident effort to avoid the competition for Federal funds, which has been experienced by those concerned with the handicapped under the administration of Title I of Public Law 89-10, the Congress is now prepared to allocate funds specifically earmarked for programs for the handicapped in the various states. The State Department of Education,

which would obviously be the appropriate organization designated by this State to administer the state plan for education of the handicapped, must be prepared both organizationally and philosophically to accept Federal funds and to intelligently apply them to the needs of the various kinds of handicapped children throughout the State.

If the administration of programs for the handicapped is spread among a number of individuals or organizations without a single administrative head, the chances are that there will be a proliferation of programs attacking the more immediate problems. Likewise, long-range programs, which take into account the impact of urbanization and automation on the employment future of the handicapped, must be made an integral part of this State's planning for the future.

It is interesting to note that in the aforementioned House Resolution 16847, under Section 509, the U. S. Commission of Education is directed "to establish and maintain within the Office of Education a Bureau for the Education and Training of the Handicapped, which shall be the principal agency in the Office of Education for administering and carrying out programs relating to the education and the training of the handicapped." This Federal bill, therefore, recognizes the utmost importance of coordinating programs for all handicapped children and adults through a single bureau, a practice which has not existed in recent years and which has been subject to a great deal of criticism by professionals and by members of the Congress themselves. The State of Maryland, therefore, should do nothing less than to identify an office and an individual, perhaps with the title of State Director of Programs for Handicapped Children, so that through this office can be coordinated the funds received under H. R. 16847, and to react to the review and recommendations of the State Commission on Education of the Handicapped as it reflects the recommendations of the various

local groups and commissions. If the State continues to have four or five persons responsible for special education, we can expect continued difficulty in implementing the intent of such legislation as Maryland House of Delegates Bill 245.

Further, with regard to the maximizing of the use of Federal and state funds for the benefit of the individual child, it will be necessary that throughout the state parent counseling centers be established. Even today, though our State has a growing number of clinical, educational and rehabilitational services available, it is somewhat difficult for the parents of the typical handicapped child or young adult to know exactly how to take advantage of these services. It is imperative that there be regional counseling centers established where parents may have a continuity of counseling with regard to the psychological, educational, social and vocational needs of their youngsters from preschool through adulthood. This problem has been recognized on a national level and in virtually every state in the Union that has seriously considered its responsibilities to handicapped children. In the City of Chicago, the Public Welfare Department has taken steps to organize such counseling services; and the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf is now in the preliminary stages of establishing such a counseling center in the District of Columbia, particularly with relation to the needs of hearing handicapped children and their parents.

There is also needed throughout the state an improved aura of communication and cooperation between educational, medical, and rehabilitational services. All too frequently, the rehabilitation agencies, for example, are not brought into the picture until such time as rehabilitation becomes a problem, whereas, had they the opportunity to participate in some of the planning earlier in the youngster's life, the need for rehabilitation might have been minimized or even avoided. Likewise, medical

specialists should coordinate with the educators in developing and planning programs for youngsters whose handicapping conditions can be expected to remain with them at least through their educational program if not into adulthood. Through the proposed parent-counseling centers, such services might well be brought to bear upon the needs of handicapped youngsters in the State at a minimum of cost and a maximum of results in preparing youngsters for self-supporting positions in society.

Let me repeat: The ultimate purpose of all our educational programs for handicapped children is to prepare them to take a position in society where they can earn a living, pay taxes, and be contributing members of society. It is this philosophy which should pervade all plans and programs throughout the State of Maryland for handicapped children. It may seem to some of you on the Commission, who are not directly involved in education, that it is unnecessary to make this type of philosophical comment, but I can assure you that some of the programs developed in the past have avoided or missed the ultimate purpose of the entire educational program; namely, the preparation of the youngster to take his place in life without the continuous support of his parents or counselors or financial support from society. In my particular area of interest and specialty, namely the hearing handicapped, we believe very strongly that the development of oral communication skills (that is, the ability to speak, lipread, and use a hearing aid) is both a desirable and a necessary goal for this State to establish for all its children with hearing losses. Only by so doing can this State truly prepare these youngsters for the kind of independence that they seek in adulthood.

With the increased emphasis upon post-secondary education in this country, it is important that this Commission extend its sights to the high school level and beyond. At present, in the U. S. Office of Education, there is a planning committee investigating the ways and means of assisting

junior colleges, vocational schools, trade schools, business schools, etc. in absorbing limited numbers of handicapped youngsters into their programs. The State of Maryland should immediately begin to work with these same institutions, encouraging them in the design of new buildings, in the design of facilities, and the design of the programs within their confines to consider the needs of the mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, emotionally disturbed, crippled, and those suffering from any other health impairment by reason of which they require special education. Obviously, this is not to indicate that the mentally retarded child should be considered in the programs of universities and other institutions of higher education. On the other hand, a trade school might well consider the needs of the educable retarded or of the crippled in order to take advantage of whatever skills do exist and to help these young people to become self-sustaining parts of our society. Here again is an outstanding opportunity for the State of Maryland to lead other states in striding forward, even in anticipation of Federal instigation. Bethany College, in West Virginia, might serve as a model on which to consider basing a junior college approach to absorbing a limited number of deaf children.

In order to achieve many of these outstanding new improvements in our state programs, we will need an improvement in the training programs throughout the state for teachers of the exceptional child. With all of the universities, junior colleges, and teacher training colleges now existing in the state, there would seem to be no reason why we could not be among the leaders in the training of teachers for the handicapped to serve not only the needs of our own state but also those of adjoining states which may not have adequate programs.

The areas of concern which unquestionably will need the greatest amount of consideration and help are those involving the preschool child and

again the child at the secondary level. If I may refer to the deaf and hard of hearing at this point, I can mention that at one time it was felt sufficient to begin to work with the preschool child at the age of 3-1/2 or 4 years to prepare him for kindergarten or first grade. Today we have found, because of improved methods of early diagnosis (some of which have been perfected right here in Maryland at the world-famous Johns Hopkins Hospital Hearing and Speech Center, under the direction of Dr. William G. Hardy), that instruction, training, and assistance to parents can be undertaken before the child reaches one year of age. This means that the term "preschool" as defined in previous decades is no longer adequate. Since we can determine whether a six-month-old child has a hearing loss, something can and should be done about it at that time. Of particular concern is the parents' preparation for the needs of their youngster, the recognition of the educational potential,and the ways of offsetting any limitations by an early start, by improved language instruction, by the early use of a hearing aid, and many other techniques that are now well known and being applied throughout the country. In planning for the future the public support of education for the handicapped should be extended to children of two years or younger.

At the secondary level the hearing handicapped child in the State of Maryland has an uncertain future. There are no secondary programs for the deaf and hard of hearing child unless he can function pretty much on his own in one of the local high schools. It is not necessary to undertake to develop a special high school for the deaf in order to provide opportunities for the capable student to carry out his high school education, but some steps are required to assist him in functioning in an environment in which virtually all of the other children have normal hearing. Actually a bill has been introduced into the House and Senate of the United States Congress to establish a model high school program for the deaf on the campus of Gallau

det College. Such a program for those youngsters who have not been provided with the academic or communication skills necessary to function in a hearing school with some assistance, is certainly desirable; but it can be hoped that, as we progress in improving our methods of instruction, in our early identification techniques, and in our counseling services, we can reduce the number of youngsters who must be relegated to a residential school populated only by other deaf children. We can hope that more and more of them can be integrated into programs with hearing youngsters -- thus being afforded all of the opportunities that these other youngsters have, plus the additional opportunity of improving their speech and lipreading by virtue of continuous contact with those who can hear. Hearing children must continually adjust to the world in which they must work and live both at the high school level and beyond. Likewise, the deaf child must be given the skills necessary to make similar adjustments.

Statistics published in the American Annals of the Deaf each year have demonstrated that more and more children with hearing losses are being educated in the public schools. In 1930 only 20% of the deaf children identified in this country were going to day schools and day classes in their local communities. Today this figure is almost 50%, and the trend is accelerating. Thus, while the programs for the hearing handicapped in public schools may not be ideal, parents are placing their children in these programs and doing everything possible to keep them in them, because of the obvious merits of having their children remain at home in their own community. State schools for the deaf are slowly but surely undertaking the challenging task of educating those less capable youngsters whose lives may be complicated by more than one physical or mental handicap or even by a social handicap which can be best met in a residential situation.

According to the report of the Babbidge Committee, established

by the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1964, following substantial national criticism of programs for the deaf in this country, "The American public has little reason to be pleased with the success it has achieved in educating deaf children." Therefore, any trend within this State to simply expand what has been done for the past 150 years,and to extend it to more children , would not appear to be the answer to better preparing these youngsters for life in society. Rather it would appear that there is a need for new thinking, new techniques, and a new philosophy which may best be applied in properly organized and staffed day classes throughout the state.

The case for the deaf child is one thing; the case for the hard of hearing child is another. This is the youngster who 50 years ago might have been considered to be profoundly deaf but today, with modern techniques of diagnosis and modern hearing aids, is classed as hard of hearing. This is also the youngster with a moderate hearing loss who years ago might have been contacted by shouting at him at the top of the lungs but today can have his hearing loss reasonably compensated for by a good hearing aid. These youngsters are betwixt and between the more profoundly hearing handicapped and those who have no hearing losses at all. Few of our public school systems have provision for the proper handling of these hard of hearing youngsters since their needs are not as profound as those of the more severely handicapped and not as easily identified. These hard of hearing youngsters can become deaf adults merely for the lack of attention to their educational and emotional needs. The recognition that this group of junior citizens exists and does have special needs may be one of the more important recommendations of the Moore Commission in its final report.

A final word with regard to the education of the hearing handicapped which should be considered by this Commission is in the area of adult education. Small classes, with properly trained teachers, have been found out-

standingly successful in areas like southern California where there is a large population of hard of hearing and deaf people who earnestly desire to improve their communication skills and their job opportunities by taking adult education. We would encourage the Commission, therefore, to consider in its report this type of need and to see how it might be incorporated into the state program of support and encouragement throughout the various local school districts.

Mr. Chairman, I have appended to this paper a very specific listing of recommendations which reflect the comments that have preceded this point in my presentation. I hope that these thoughts have been helpful to you, and I want to assure you of my willingness on behalf of the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf to offer any facilities or help that we can in the future to making this Commission a beacon that can be seen not only in the State of Maryland but throughout the country in improving programs for the handicapped.

Thank you.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS
by George W. Fellendorf, Executive Director
Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf

1. The Maryland Commission to Study Educational Needs of Handicapped Children should not be permitted to disband on November 1, 1966, but should be made a continuing committee. (page 2)

2. Regional subcommittees of the Commission should be established to assure continuing representation of regional needs in the deliberations of the full Commission. (page 3)

3. An office for the handicapped should be established in the State Department of Education at the director or assistant superintendent level to assure adequate attention to the needs of the handicapped person and to permit prompt, appropriate reaction to Federally-supplied funds for the handicapped. (page 4)

4. Parent-counseling centers should be established to assure proper and continuing counseling and referral services to the parents of handicapped children. (page 5)

5. Through conferences and joint committees at the state and regional levels, educational, medical, rehabilitational and social agencies should be brought into closer cooperation in the interests of the handicapped. (page 5)

6. The University of Maryland, junior colleges, vocational and business schools should be encouraged to make provision in their curricula and their physical plants to accept students with handicapping conditions. Architectural barriers for the physically handicapped and academic barriers for all the handicapped must be eliminated. (page 7)

7. Improved and expanded teacher-preparation programs in the State should be considered to assure an adequate supply of trained teachers of the handicapped. (page 7)

8. The public support of handicapped children should be extended downward to the age of two years, or less, to assure adequate diagnosis and training during the most critical learning years of the child's life. (page 8)

9. It should be declared as the policy of the Free State of Maryland that all handicapped children in the state should be entitled to an educational program commensurate with their needs and that the ultimate purpose of such programs should be, to the maximum extent possible, the preparation of the handicapped to take a self-supporting position in normal society. (page 6)

10. Particular consideration should be given to the needs of the less severely handicapped, such as the hard of hearing child, for whom

the programs for the deaf are not appropriate, but who need some degree of special consideration in the public schools. (page 10)

11. Adult education for the handicapped should be considered and encouraged in order to assist adults in fulfilling their responsibilities as citizens and in helping them advance in their employment. (page 10)